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| <b>Subject:</b>          | <b>Partial Review of Polling Places</b>           |   |                    |
| <b>Date of Meeting:</b>  | <b>22 January 2015</b>                            |   |                    |
| <b>Report of:</b>        | <b>Executive Director Finance &amp; Resources</b> |   |                    |
| <b>Contact Officer:</b>  | <b>Name:</b>                                      | <b>Claire Wardle</b>                      | <b>Tel: 291997</b> |
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| <b>Ward(s) affected:</b> | <b>Central Hove, Goldsmid, Wish</b>               |   |                    |

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE**

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 This report deals with a partial review of polling places within the City of Brighton & Hove.
- 1.2 The council is legally required to review polling districts and polling places every five years. A full review, including wide consultation, was carried out in autumn 2013, and changes took effect for the European Parliamentary elections in May 2014.
- 1.3 Following those elections, issues have arisen about three of the council's designated polling places, making a review necessary in Central Hove, Goldsmid and Wish Wards.
- 1.4 A consultation started on 20 October and ended on 19 December 2014, inviting views on alternative venues for polling places. This report addresses the issues raised in the responses and makes recommendations for revised polling arrangements to be implemented henceforth.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 That the Policy & Resources Committee approves the following:
  - (a) that the Parish Room, Church of the Sacred Heart, Norton Road be used as a polling place for UY, Central Hove ward.
  - (b) that the Refectory Room, Brighton & Hove Sixth Form College (BHASVIC), be used as a polling place for NZ, Goldsmid ward
  - (c) that the Ajax Hall be retained as a polling place for NV, Goldsmid ward
  - (d) that a portacabin be used as the polling place for SW, Wish ward, to be sited in Saxon Road or the western side of Aldrington Recreation ground, dependent on the advice of transport planners.
- 2.2 That the Executive Director Finance & Resources be granted delegated authority to take the measures, as required by law, to bring the changes into effect.

- 2.3 That the Committee delegates to the Executive Director Finance & Resources, following consultation with the Group Leaders and respective ward councillors, the designation of alternative polling places in the event of any polling place in Brighton & Hove not being available.

### **3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 Under the Representation of the People Act 1983, the council has a duty to divide its area into polling districts and to designate a polling place for each district for UK Parliamentary elections. It also has to keep these arrangements under review. The arrangements made for parliamentary elections are also used at other elections.
- 3.2 The principles underlying the council's approach to polling districts and polling places are:
- a) To try and identify new polling places in areas where the existing provision is inadequate.
  - b) To ensure, as far as practicable, that polling places are accessible to people with disabilities.
  - c) To ensure that all electors have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances.
  - d) To try and minimise disruption to schools.

### **4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 4.1 Details of the Returning Officer's proposals, and a summary of the responses to them, are contained in Appendix 1.

### **5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 The consultation period for this review ran 20 October to 19 December 2014. Public notice of the review was given, and information about the review made available on the council's website and on the council's consultation portal. Any elector in the Brighton Kemptown, Brighton Pavilion and Hove constituencies was entitled to make representations.
- 5.2 The consultation paper, together with maps of each ward showing the polling district boundaries, can still be viewed on the council's website at [Partial Review of Polling Places](#).
- 5.3 Ward Councillors, Members of Parliament, local political parties and other interested groups or persons were also consulted.
- 5.4 Some further suggestions for change were received during the consultation, and the responses are summarised in Appendix 1.

## 6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The recommendations have been made in line with the principles outlined in paragraph 3.2.
- 6.2 The polling place scheme should be approved to enable the planning and organisation for the May 2015 elections to proceed.

## 7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

### Financial Implications:

- 7.1 The review of polling districts and places will result in a minimal change in hire costs, which will be met by the Electoral Services budget. The costs for the 2015 elections will be shared between the council and central government - extra resources have already been identified to cover the council's share of this four-election year.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Name Peter Francis*

*Date: 10/12/2014*

### Legal Implications:

- 7.2 The legislative framework for reviews of polling districts and places consists of: (i) sections 18A to 18E and Schedule A1 of the Representation of the People Act 1983; (ii) The Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places (Parliamentary Elections) Regulations 2006 (SI 2006/2965); and (iii) section 17 of the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013, which introduced a change to the timing of compulsory reviews.

*Lawyer Consulted:*

*Oliver Dixon*

*Date: 11/12/14*

### Equalities Implications:

- 7.3 No equalities impact assessment has been carried out. The council must ensure that, so far as is reasonable and practical, every polling place for which it is responsible is accessible to people who are disabled.

### Sustainability Implications:

- 7.4 There are no implications

### Any Other Significant Implications:

- 7.5 There are no other significant implications

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

### **Appendices:**

1. Polling station scheme, Returning Officer's proposals and summary of responses

### **Documents in Members' Rooms**

None

### **Background Documents**

1. Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places Consultation Paper – 20 October 2014
2. Consultation responses – file held by Electoral Services
3. Electoral Commission Guidance – Reviews of polling districts, polling places and polling stations